

IS IT A NECESSITY TO TEACH SUMMARY WRITING AS AN ATTEMPT TO IMPROVE ENGLISH PROFICIENCY IN ESP CLASS?

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Abstract: English has frequently appeared as a language of numerous materials in the academic instruction. Thus, one's English proficiency has been a demand for whoever involved in academic activities. Acquiring English, however, is not easy for non-English department students. The students must be facilitated to promote their better learning in their ESP class. This paper discusses a study about students' ability and problems in writing summary at the Business Administration Department of the State Polytechnic of Malang. The participants involved were 23 first-year students. The data were collected by means of a test and an interview dealing with summary writing. The finding shows that the students have problems in writing English summary resulted from their low English proficiency, such as their limited vocabulary, incorrect sentence structure, problems in identifying main idea and supporting ideas, and paraphrasing. Thus, summary writing is offered both as materials and a method in the ESP instruction as an attempt to promote students' English learning.

Keywords: *summary writing, English proficiency, ESP class*

Introduction

In academic setting, writing a summary is frequently required for the purpose of either personal need or scholarly assignment. As a personal need, Soedarso (1994:77) considers summarizing as one of the note-taking activities. In the meantime, Dawe (2013) and Quain (2013) have indicated that summarizing has become a task often assigned by teachers. Therefore, students will deal a lot with writing a summary throughout their academic life.

Generally, summary writing is a learning strategy applicable for any subjects, including English learning and other content courses. According to Pappas (2009), summarizing becomes one of the most effective strategies and the essential skill for learning. Students, without doubt, benefit a great deal from summarizing.

However, writing summary is not easy. It requires complex skills. Many studies have signified that learners experience problems in summarizing texts (Hahn and Garner, 1985). Ann (2014) also views that summary writing is a difficult academic skill; thus, students need to be explicitly taught.

Summary Writing and Its Relation to English Proficiency

By definition, according to Ann (2014), summarizing is distilling a long text to its essentials and its most outstanding key points by excluding examples and details. In this sense, the specific form, sentence structure, and vocabulary are changed, but the main ideas remain. According to Jones (2012), summarizing is taking larger selections of text and pointing out the gist, the key ideas, and the most essential main points. A summary, then, is a restatement of the author's main point, purpose, intent and supporting details in one's own words (Gulcat, 2007).

In order to produce a good summary, some criteria must be met. Williamson (2006) has underlined that in a summary: (1) there must be an introductory sentence stating the text's title and author and restating its thesis or focus; (2) all the text's main points and major supporting details must be included; (3) the minor and irrelevant details must be deleted; (4) all the similar ideas must be connected; (5) there must be accurate paraphrasing by maintaining the text's meaning; (6) there must be student's own wording and sentence style; (7) there must be quotation marks when using phrasing directly from the text; (8) the article's ideas must be included but personal opinion must be excluded; (9) the article's emphasis and purpose must be preserved; (10) the article's organization must be kept; (11) the length must be shorter than the original; (12) there must be transition through use of author's name and present-tense verb; and (13) there must be few or no mechanical errors. In addition, it is also important to note that there exist types of summary, namely: main point summary, key points summary, and outline summary (Salahub, et.al., 2014).

As a matter of fact, summarizing has lots of benefits particularly in developing many aspects of students' English proficiency. In support to this point, Ann (2014) puts forth that summarizing enhances, first, reading comprehension skill and critical thinking as students determine main ideas. Secondly, summarizing

increases vocabulary and improves grammar as students paraphrase text. Thirdly, summarizing develops writing skill as students draft and edit the summary.

Apart from the benefit of summarization to learning, the typical errors students repeatedly produce in making summary are such of: copying word for word, writing long and detailed points, or writing shortly but missing key information. In conjunction to that, Jones (2012) has identified students' common mistakes as follows: (a) students write down everything, (b) students write down next to nothing, (c) students give complete sentences, (d) students write too much, (e) students don't write enough, and (f) students copy word for word. Such facts clearly imply that if students can summarize well, they are learning and trained to improve reading and writing skill, develop vocabulary and grammar knowledge.

Teaching Foreign Language for Specific Purposes

In vocational schools, which becomes the writer's place of teaching, the typical English Language Teaching (ELT) is concerned with the teaching of ESP (English for Specific Purposes). The English for Specific Purposes teaching is the teaching of English as a Foreign Language in regard to specific profession, subject, or purpose (Bojovic, 2014). Similarly, Sulisty (2009) says that English for specific purposes (ESP) is the kind of English used in particular fields and specified in three main areas: science and technology, business and economics, and social sciences.

Bojovic (2014) has classified ESP into two main areas, namely: **English for Academic Purposes** (EAP) and **English for Occupational Purposes** (EOP). Meanwhile, Sulisty (2009) categorizes ESP into two kinds, namely: academic and occupational purposes.

As expected by the Vocational Higher Education in Indonesia, the vocational institution graduates are expected to acquire English competence in the subject field such as: engineering, science, business, or accounting and English for general communication. As a matter of fact, the development of ESP teaching from time to time has been developed through five stages (Mohammed, 2012). The five stages comprises: (1) ESP teaching regarding with register analysis—the presumption that ESP constituted a specific register different from that of general English; (2) ESP teaching dealing with discourse—the assumption that the students' difficulties arise from unfamiliarity with English use; (3) ESP teaching dealing with target situation analysis—the belief that ESP's purpose is to enable learners to function adequately in a target situation; (4) ESP teaching in connection to skills-centered approach—the notion that there are common reasoning and interpreting in all language use which enable students to extract meaning from discourse; (5) ESP teaching in regard to learning-centered approach—the approach to meet students' academic and professional needs.

Given this fact, the duty of the English teachers is, then, to prepare students to be able to use English not only for general communication but also within specific area. The role of ESP teachers is more than just teaching. According to Bojovic (2014), the roles of ESP teachers are: (1) as a teacher; (2) as a course designer and material provider; (3) as a researcher; (4) as a collaborator; and (5) as an evaluator. To respond to such a challenge, it is vital for ESP teachers to promote an effective learning for students. This is also as an attempt to make the most of the teaching and learning process.

Methodology

This study was a case study. The obtained data—regarding students' ability to write a summary and their problems in the process of making summary—were analyzed qualitatively. There was no single statistical computation involved in interpreting the data.

The subjects of this study were 23 students of Business Administration Department at State Polytechnic of Malang belonging to the same class where the writer was teaching. The students were assigned to write summaries of the given texts. The texts' length were about 150-250 words and the time allotted was 90 minutes. After completing their summaries, the students were interviewed covering questions about the definition of summary, points to include or exclude in summary, and problems encountered by students in writing summary.

The students were interviewed in groups consisting of 4 to 5 students. The interview lasted about 3 hours.

The students' summarization was analyzed based on indicators. The indicators were adapted from some experts' views (Jones, 2012; Williamson, 2006; and Brown and Day, and Kintsch and van Dijk as cited in Hahn and Garner, 1985). There were no score given. Instead, the summaries were only considered adequate or inadequate. The indicators are identified in the following rubric:

Table 1. Summarization Rubric

No.	Criteria
1	Stating an introductory sentence (including title, author, and thesis restatement—either by selecting or creating topic/thesis sentence)
2	Pointing out the main ideas and key/supporting details
3	Deleting minor, irrelevant, unnecessary and repetitious ideas
4	Grouping, classifying or categorizing the larger ideas
5	Combining related ideas or using a superordinate term to refer to a list of terms and related-elements of actions.
6	Paraphrasing accurately by still maintaining the article's meaning
7	Using students' own wording (or keywords) and sentence (or phrases)
8	Using quotation marks when paraphrasing directly from the article
9	Including only the article's ideas and excluding personal opinion
10	Reflecting article's emphasis and purpose
11	Recognizing article's organization
12	Writing shorter and brief than the original article but complete notes (or enough to convey the gist)
13	Having few or no mechanical errors

Discussion

The students clearly encounter problems in dealing with their English summary. The problems are reflection of both their insufficient knowledge about summarization and their English proficiency.

The first prominent problem is regarding the mechanical errors made by the students. Their low English proficiency influences their ability to make English summary (e.g. they can not identify reference and pronouns, they can not distinguish a phrase from a sentence, they take any sentence unconnected each other). Secondly, the students tend to quote the original sentences from the text without any quotation mark. Thirdly, students take any sentence not considered the main point or important details. Forth, the students have limited vocabulary coverage resulting in their wrong flow of ideas. Fifth, the students include their personal opinion in their summary. Sixth, the students include unnecessary points taken from text in their summary. Seventh, the students take original sentences from the text without paraphrasing. Eighth, the students are trying to paraphrase yet the points are not what the text is intended to convey. Ninth, the students mostly do not have sufficient knowledge about summary writing (such as including the text title, the writer, and the thesis sentence in their introductory sentence). Tenth, the students do not write more briefly and shorter than the original text.

The students' responses from the interview reveal that they support an idea that summary nurtures success in learning. They believe that texts are better comprehended through writing a good summary. Summary is also seen as a strategy to sum up points of the readings. Process of understanding occurs when summarizing. By making summary, the students think that they are able to integrate and improve their learning. They also can remember information, build comprehension and relationship between ideas. In their opinion, summary writing assigned by their lecturer aims to assess the students' mastery of the subject. The limited vocabulary, the lack of knowledge on grammar and sentence structure, the inability to identify the main and supporting ideas, the inability to paraphrase in English are admitted by the students to be their dominant problems. Those problems inhibit them to write good summaries.

Conclusion and Recommendation

After all, it can be concluded that the students taken as the subjects of the present study encounter problems dealing with both knowledge of summarization and language proficiency. The students mostly do not understand the principles of how a summary must be written. They do not know that (1) summarization must include introductory sentence; (2) that summarization must be more briefly and shorter than the original readings; (3) that summarization must exclude personal opinion; (4) that summarization must be in the form of paraphrasing and any quotation must be utilized with quotation marks. In addition, the students also do not have adequate English proficiency. Their proficiency weaknesses particularly regard with their limited vocabulary, sentence structure and grammar, reading comprehension skill, and writing skill. In reading comprehension skill, it is still frequently found that the students encounter difficulties in determining main ideas, identifying key important details, and eliminating unimportant points. Such elements in reading comprehension skill, in fact, has become the initial skill to acquire (Turner as cited in Indrianti, 2012). In writing skill, the students obviously stumble upon problems in paraphrasing and organizing points of readings cohesively and coherently in their summary. Consequently, the organization of ideas in their summarization can not be followed easily.

As ESP teachers should function significantly in cultivating students' learning in English class, they should provide students with effective method and materials to learn. The writer proposes the incorporation of summary writing instruction in English teaching. The first thing to do is that teachers should intentionally teach

how to determine main ideas of readings. Teachers must explain that there exists a model of main idea expressions as suggested by Moore dan Cunningham (1986) comprising: title, key word, topic issue, topic, topic/thesis sentence, selective summary, theme, gist, and interpretation. Then, teachers give sufficient practices on main idea finding exploring a variety of expressions. Second, teachers should give comprehension questions so as to direct students to practice to get the key supporting points/details of passages and to delete unimportant and repeated points in passages. This step is at once leading students to get the gist. Thirdly, teachers assign students to identify and connect similar ideas by making use of superordinate terms to list facts. Then, in a separate paper, students may get started to practice paraphrasing sentences using their own words. In this sense, students must be well-noticed that their sentences must be more briefly and shorter than the original readings. Teachers should clarify how an effective summary must be composed. Those steps should be practiced frequently to train students to be proficient in summary writing.

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